

This Sacred Land

The land on which we live is sacred. I know this because many many Native people lived here in Peace and Harmony with the Nature Spirits. The people did not have policemen, padlocks, prisons, penitentiaries, or burglar alarms. Nor did they have the "book" (the Bible). But they knew about the Great Spirit, who created everything.

A great chief of the Similaka-meugh (Eagle People, now known as Similkameen) was born in this place, along with others of the People, before and after him. They all drank the crystal clear water of the valley's rivers and streams, grew their food on its unpoisoned soil, breathed its fresh, clean air, and worshipped the power of the Sun as it blessed them with life each morning.

Our Ancestors had a special respect for the Mother Earth and all it offered them. I'm told by Elders they built their shelters in the ground, which provided them with an insulated warmth in the winter and a cool dwelling in the summer. If one looks carefully around this area, one can see signs of this lifestyle.

Many of the valley People respected the wild creatures which walked the land, flew in its winds, and swam in its rivers. They took only that which they truly needed for food and gave thanks to the Creator for those provisions. Life was much less complex then, and the People of "The Ashnola, Similkameen and Okanagan Valleys" enjoyed life that way.

It makes my heart heavy when I see our Native people forgetting the true and good ways of our ancestors. It saddens me to see them come in with bulldozers, drive over, scrape off, and flatten out our sacred Mother Earth which housed, fed, and buried the People. It is unfortunate to see the Red Man, slowly becoming a "brown" white man as he puts the value of money and material possessions above his oneness with the spirit in all living things. He has forgotten that Grandfather Sun, Mother Earth, Grandmother Moon and our Spirited Waters need to be honored, respected, cared for, and shared with for their Spiritual, Emotional, Mental, and Physical powers. He has forgotten that those powers also lie within himself, waiting to be revealed and united with others in a positive way.

When a child does something very wrong, a good parent will take away a special privilege which the child is used to. When the child shows that he has learned something positive by making his mistake, then he is allowed to regain the privilege.

If we, the children of this land do not show more honor, respect, caring, and sharing for the special privilege of living on this - The Mother Earth - then she and Grandfather Sun, through the power of the Great Spirit, may take away this great privilege which we have selfishly taken for granted. This great reward is called "Life." It is experienced by showing Love and Respect for all natural elements - earth, air, fire, water, wind, and for wildlife and all living things on which Human Beings are dependent, remember. Let us remember that the way to live in peace and harmony with each other and our surroundings is to be at peace with ourselves. Many of the things which have tempted Red and White men alike have made him seemingly very unloving and unpeaceful. May we overcome all those qualities we do not need (such as greed), by showing the Good Qualities of our True Nature — like "Giving". Most importantly, may we know and remember that we have, deep within our beings - a Peaceful and Loving Spirit. It is time to let it out!

May we remember these truths as life, here - in this valley, in other valleys, and on this Planet depends on us knowing and living them.

We can choose to learn from our Traditional and Spiritual elders to live in harmony and balance with all things. Or, we can choose to learn from those who seek to profit, no matter what the cost to Mother Earth. If it is to survive - the natural world, the world we all know and love - needs protection and understanding. *IF IT DOES NOT SURVIVE, OF COURSE, NEITHER WILL WE!!!!*